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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001382

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SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA: FM PRESSED IRAN ON ENGAGEMENT

REF: ANKARA 1362

Classified By: POL Counselor Daniel O'Grady, for reasons 1.4(b,d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: On September 18 MFA's Department Head for Iran Korkut Gungen gave us a readout of FM Davutoglu's September 12-13 visit to Iran, noting that Davutoglu had raised the nuclear issue with each of his interlocutors (including a tete-a-tete with Ahmadinejad) and had pressed the GOI to engage productively in the P5 plus 1 discussions. He said the MFA agrees that the September 9 Iranian proposal did not address the international community's concerns. Gungen said Turkey continues to stand with the international community but must take into account its bilateral relationship with Iran, with whom it shares a border. The MFA is hoping that Iran will engage the P5 plus 1 on the specific concerns over its nuclear program during the talks scheduled for October 1, but Gungen conceded that Turkey did not receive any signals during Davutoglu's visit that Tehran is prepared to do anything beyond initiating a dialogue. Gungen told us Iranian officials have voiced concerns about the draft resolution on non-proliferation being discussed in advance of the September 24 UNSC nuclear non-proliferation summit, and have hinted at possibly withdrawing from the October 1 talks if their concerns about the resolution's wording on existing sanctions are not addressed. Gungen noted that President Ahmadinejad is expected to attend the November 9 OIC Economic Summit in Istanbul, and mentioned a possible visit by Turkish PM Erdogan to Tehran, possibly before the end of this year. END SUMMARY.

FM DAVUTOGLU PRESSES AHMADINEJAD TO ENGAGE

12. (C) On September 18 we met with newly appointed MFA Department Head for Iran Korkut Gungen, who gave us a more detailed readout of FM Davutoglu's September 12-13 meetings in Tehran (REFTEL). Gungen said that while the visit overall was "positive, useful and timely," FM Davutoglu had taken a strong stance in pressing Iran to engage positively with the P5 plus 1, saying that the FM gave a "strong and clear" message that was at times "not diplomatic." Gungen acknowledged that if Iran does not engage productively with the P5 plus 1 on October 1, the only way forward may be tougher sanctions, which would have a negative impact on the Iranian-Turkish relationship. But he added that, "we have not reached that point yet."

13. (C) The FM and the GOT have been increasingly forceful in urging Iran to engage productively with the P5 plus 1, according to Gungen. He said FM Davutoglu told his Iranian interlocutors (including President Ahmadinejad, FM Mottaki, Nuclear Negotiator Jalili, and Majlis Speaker Larijani) that while Iran's September 9 proposal included certain "useful elements," it should have been more "operational" and that Iran should not miss this opportunity to engage with the P5 plus 1. Gungen said Iran indicated its willingness to

"engage in dialogue" with the P5 plus 1, but he conceded that Iran did not send any signal that it was prepared to address the specific concerns about its nuclear program.

¶4. (C) Gungen acknowledged that Iran's "readiness for dialogue" could just be a time-buying tactic by Tehran. When asked what Turkey would be willing to support in the UNSC should talks fail, Gungen replied that this could be called the "million-dollar question" and said GÖT policy-makers have not yet come to a conclusive position. However, Gungen stressed that while Turkey is in a difficult spot in its attempt to further develop positive relations and as a border country with Iran, Turkey has consistently acted with the international community, and emphatically does not want to see a nuclear-armed Iran.

¶5. (C) Regarding Turkey's offer to host the October 1 meeting in Istanbul, Gungen said that Iran was open to the possibility, but non-committal about a preferred location. The Iranians, however, he said, did indicate concerns about the draft resolution on non-proliferation being discussed in advance of the September 24 UNSC nuclear nonproliferation summit, particularly about the references to "existing resolutions" related to nonproliferation. Gungen said that the GÖI expressed to the GÖT its displeasure with the draft resolution, and said the results of the September 24 UNSC meeting and the text of the resolution could affect Iran's decision to attend the meeting with the P5 plus 1.

AREAS OF TURKISH-IRANIAN COOPERATION...

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¶6. (C) During FM Davutoglu's visit, he also discussed bilateral security cooperation with Iran on PKK/PJAK issues. Gungen said that Turkey is satisfied with cooperation on this issue. The FM also had general discussions on further economic cooperation, and Iran shared ideas on energy and transit cooperation. The two sides did not reach any conclusive agreements, but confirmed their willingness to build on existing efforts. The meetings touched on regional issues, with both sides agreeing to cooperate in the future, if necessary, on tensions between Iraq and Syria. They also discussed the situations in Afghanistan and Lebanon, the Caucasus, and the Palestine-Israel peace process. Gungen said the Iranian position toward the peace process has not changed.

¶7. (C) We asked Gungen if Iran was appreciative of Turkey's outreach and attempts to build the bilateral relationship. Gungen said that Ahmadinejad is facing internal and international pressure and increasing isolation, and so is looking for ways to alleviate this. He speculated that Ahmadinejad and the GÖI may see Turkey as a potential way to interact with the world, and so they consider the relationship worth developing.

...AND NON-COOPERATION

¶8. (C) Gungen raised the high number of tourists coming from Iran to Turkey, but commented that when Turkey tried to approach the GÖI with campaigns aimed at promoting Turkey as a tourist destination, they received a cool reaction. Gungen elaborated that while the GÖI does not hinder the Iranians wishing to travel to Turkey, it does not actively encourage them and is not supportive of Turkish efforts to increase Iranian tourism to Turkey.

UPCOMING VISITS

¶9. (C) Gungen noted that during the FM's visit to Tehran, the possibility of PM Erdogan visiting Tehran was raised. While no dates have been set, Gungen said it could happen as

early as this year. The MFA also expects Ahmadinejad to attend the upcoming OIC Economic Summit on 9 November to be held in Istanbul, where he will likely hold bilateral meetings with his GOT counterparts.

JEFFREY

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